

The National Guard Now

PROBABLY more printer's ink has been expended during the past year in magazine articles and the public press in regard to matters military than ever before during a like period in times of peace. The influence of this nation is now worldwide and matters relating to national defense are becoming the subject of more serious consideration day by day. Prior to 1903 matters military had been traveling in a well worn rut for more than a hundred years. Army posts to the number of approximately 150, garrisoned by regular troops in numbers varying from a company to a regiment or more as a matter of routine were scattered all over the country. The regular soldier was in no sense in close touch with the people or law making power and his value, needs and necessities were accorded scant consideration. The respective national guards were purely state forces with no place to look for guidance or instruction outside of themselves and there was practically nothing in common between them and the regular establishment. Under government appropriation they were permitted to draw a certain amount in value of arms, uniform and equipment, and the states made more or less reasonable appropriations for armories and necessary expenses, and there, so far as the public and legislative acts were concerned, matters military and matters of military policy ended.

IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

Such was not the case, however, in other countries. The majority of nations have considered public defense as of first importance and have progressed rapidly year by year in military preparedness, efficiency and power. The modern tactical theory of warfare is for the aggressive nation to throw the whole power of its military resources upon its opponent at the outbreak of hostilities and thereby cripple it most seriously at the start and perhaps force the desired concession. Since 1871 Germany has maintained a peace footing army strength of substantially 1 per cent of her population, which today means substantially 625,000 men, and the policy of other European nations has been along parallel lines. It needs no exercise of the imagination to realize what the sudden throwing of the full military power of a nation so prepared would be upon an unprepared nation. While the United States is free from many considerations which strongly move foreign nations, and in no sense is an aggressive nation or covetous of the territory or property of any other people or power, yet the military status of other nations necessarily called for a more defined and tangible military policy and establishment than the country had been content to maintain for so many years in the past.

ITS NATIONAL ASPECT.

The first substantial result of this patent necessity was the law of Congress of 1903 which brought the national guard into direct connection with federal government, made it, to a limited extent, a federal force, provided that its arms, equipment and drill should be the same as that of the regular army, demanded results from its work to be evidenced by efficiency, and required inspections of its every organization once a year by

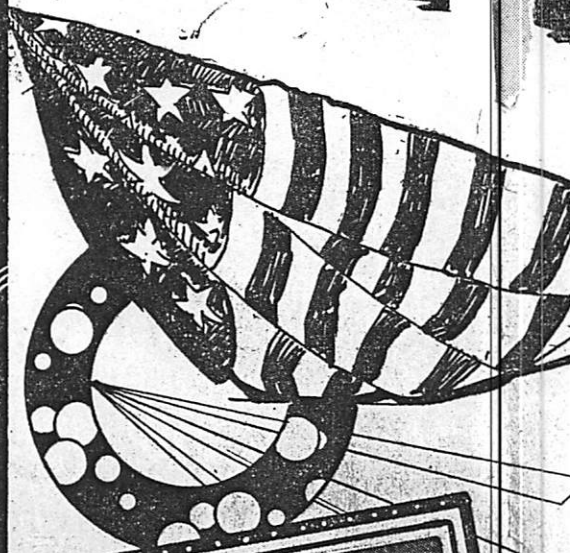


GEN. E. A. WEDGWOOD

an officer of the regular army detailed for that purpose and required to report his findings in writing to the department at Washington. From that time on the regular establishment and the national guard began to get acquainted, appreciate and understand each other. As a result of the experience from the time of the passage of this act up to 1908 an amendment thereto was made which still further brought the regular establishment and the national guard in touch with each other, raised the efficiency of the national guard and unified the interests of the two establishments to the mutual advantage of both. The army and the national guard have been growing together gradually under the legislation above referred to with the definite result in view of an organized, efficient military force at least of substantial, if not of sufficient, and adequate size.

PEACE TRAINING.

In 1906 joint field maneuvers under service conditions were held for the first time in different parts of the United States and have been held biennially since. An observer who attended the joint camp in Wyoming during each successive camp could not but be struck with the pronounced advance in efficiency of the joint forces year by year, both as to the facility of making camp, the character of camp maintained and the efficiency of the allied forces in field exercises and maneuvers, and even a technical observer would be struck by the perfection of the sanitation, the working of the subsistence department and the absence of sickness and physical disability at the last camp held. This condition was possible by reason of the advance made by the national guard forces side by side with the regular forces and under the supervision and supervision of the regular army and officers of the regular army during the camp last re-



CAPT. H. La F. APPLEWHITE.

ferred to five able officer of the regular service were detailed with the Utah guard and gave their entire time and best efforts in its behalf during the entire period of its attendance

THE AMERICAN FIGHTING FORCE.

Under unity of effort and the consideration of the common interests, there now exists a tangible military establishment with a common head and capable of acting with reasonable promptness and efficiency, from which a

mobile force of substantial men could be put in short notice, a result possible even three years

While substantial progress has been made results have been by no means much legislation particularly by the federal government, on behalf of both the national guard, served hoped for result is legislation is beginning